Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Board of Directors Meeting

AMENDED MINUTES

August 17, 2017, 6:30 p.m.
Rec Room, Sycamore Drive Community Center
1692 Sycamore Drive, Simi Valley, CA 93065
(805) 584-4400; www.rsrdp.org

1. CALL TO ORDER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE- The meeting was called to order by Chair O’Brien at 6:30 p.m. The pledge of allegiance was led by Wayne Nakaoka.

2. ROLL CALL – Directors Abele, Freeman, Johnson and O’Brien were present. The following staff members were in attendance: Douglas Duran, Tracy Engel, Elia Haz, Wayne Nakaoka, Theresa Pennington, Larry Peterson and Brian Pierik. The following guests attended the meeting: Mike Roblin, D. Singer, Glenn Suffern.

3. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Mike Roblin stated he sent a few e-mails to the District regarding the tennis courts at Rancho Tapo Community Park (RTCP). He read an article in the Acorn about the conversion of four tennis courts at Rancho Simi Community Park (RSCP) and four at RTCP. He had written to Doug Gale who sent an email in response regarding the conversion at RTCP. Larry Peterson said that there had been some discussion about the concept. Roblin stated that the courts at RSCP have not been renovated and the lights are not as good which creates a safety issue. At times he has been bothered by drug addicts at RSCP. He would support converting two pickle ball courts and two tennis courts for multiuse but he is not in favor of completely getting rid of the tennis courts. He sees the most usage between 5-8 pm daily and not as much during the day.

Director Abele said he was concerned with how the article in the Acorn was written and mentioned that Doug Gale was misquoted. Abele was also concerned there was a slant in the article. He said he has an open mind, has not made a decision and everything will be taken into consideration. One possibility is to build additional pickle ball courts and leave the tennis courts alone; there is an additional cost for that approach which can be taken into consideration.

Deborah. Singer stated she was concerned with the discussion that took place at the July 6 meeting regarding converting the tennis courts to pickle ball courts. She said some items that weren’t mentioned in the meeting are as follows: 1) The tennis community was not given an opportunity to provide input on the possible conversion of the tennis courts. It was put on the agenda, and tennis supporters did not have equal input; 2) The number of current available courts with or without lights total 45 for pickle ball and 14 for tennis; 3)
The legitimate need for pickle ball is not based on need, it’s based on greed, preference and convenience; 4) The use of tennis courts at Royal High School is not a remedy.

Glenn Suffern stated he is a tennis captain in an adult league and handles the core reservations. The most desirable park to play tennis at is Rancho Madera Community Park which is always full. Suffern was able to move some matches to be held at RSCP. He suggested building six more pickle ball courts at RTCP rather than converting courts at RSCP.

Director Abele stated the tennis group has not had the opportunity to express their concerns and suggested the topic is placed on a future agenda. With the comments made tonight there would be more transparency if it were added to the agenda before it goes to the Advance Planning Committee. District Manager Peterson confirmed Abele’s request.

Director Freeman appreciates the public comments and assured them the matter is taken seriously, all the options will be looked at and the Board will hear from both groups. Pickle ball is growing and all comments will be reviewed and no decision has been made. The normal process is to discuss it at an Advance Planning Committee. She assured the guests there has not been a decision made.

Director Abele asked the District Manager to present the cost of new pickle ball courts and possible locations at a future meeting.

Director Freeman requested inclusion in the discussion the cost associated with improving the tennis courts at RSCP and a return to the discussion of a tennis court reservation system.

Chair O’Brien asked if another survey could take place at the courts.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Regular Meeting – August 3, 2017- Board Member Ed Abele – One item on page 2 under 1st paragraph quoted as saying “he also toured even on the 3rd” amended to “he went on the 4th of July”, – Director Freeman moved to approve the amended minutes for the Regular Meeting of August 3, 2017; Vice Chair Johnson seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

5. SCHEDULED ITEMS AND PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. Presentation of the Full Time Employee of the Month for July 2017 to Bill Moritzky- Bill Moritzky was unable to attend the meeting, his plaque will be presented to him in person.

b. Presentation of the Part Time Employee of the Month for July 2017 to Daniel Flores- Director of Administration Pennington presented the staff report honoring Flores and stating Daniel has been a maintenance worker for one year. He is always the first to volunteer for an assignment and is liked and a great asset. Chair O’Brien
presented him with a plaque and a check for $75.00. Director of Planning and Maintenance Nakaoka stated how he really appreciates everything Flores does and commended him on being a hard worker.

c. Public Hearing on the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Annual Budget, Planning and Maintenance Projects and Three Year Project Plan for Fiscal Year 2017-18- District Manager Peterson presented the staff report and stated this is the second public hearing for the annual budget. He suggested the Chair open the public hearing for public discussion regarding the budget.

Chair O’Brien opened the hearing at 7:06 pm. There were no comments from the public. Chair O’Brien closed the hearing at 7:07 pm. Peterson stated they will be closing the books for the fiscal year and will complete the final budget in the next month or two.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Approval of Check Register: 7/21/17 (Payroll); 7/31/17 (Accounts Payable) Vice Chair Johnson moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Director Freeman seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

7. CONTINUED BUSINESS

a. Continued Review and Discussion Regarding Public Use and Safety at Rancho Simi Community Park (oral)- District Manager Peterson stated this is a continued discussion of this item. The additional ranger coverage at Rancho Simi Community Park has continued since the last meeting. The lights at the pavilion are being reviewed to ensure they are adequate. The timer on the lights was reset so that the pavilions are lit until 10:15 pm to improve visibility. Peterson stated the increased ranger patrols have helped. Vice Chair Johnson went to the park at 8pm on a Tuesday and Thursday, and stated it was quiet at the park both days. Director Abele asked if this means a temporary assignment for rangers will continue. Peterson explained that most rangers are part time and their hours can be increased as necessary. Abele stated he would like the additional ranger coverage to continue, Director Freeman and Chair O’Brien were also in agreement and suggested the coverage be more random. District Manager confirmed increased ranger coverage will continue in a less predictable manner and that he would keep the Board informed as to how this goes.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Authorization to Solicit Bids for New Fencing within Cal Trans Encroachment Area at Alamos Canyon - the staff report was presented by Director of Planning and Maintenance Wayne Nakaoka who said that in December 2016 the purchase was finalized for the 326 acres and it contains critical plant and animal habitat. The property was purchased through grants. An agreement was previously approved
between the District and the County which provides for the District’s construction of a small 6 car parking lot in the Oak Park County Park. Phase 1 will include repairing the existing barbwire fence to secure the area. Director Freeman asked if the District has $200,000 allocated for the parking lot and the trail and if so, would it be enough. Nakaoka said the trail itself is not to be paved and instead it will be graded and will connect to an old asphalt road and the parking lot construction cost should be fairly low, and stated in his opinion the $200,000 will cover the cost of these projects. Director Freeman moved to approve the Authorization to Solicit Bids for New Fencing with the Cal Trans Encroachment Area at Alamos Canyon. Director Abele seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

b. Consideration and Authorization to Host the Mobile Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall (A.V. Wall) at Rancho Tapo Community Park in 2019- Director of Planning and Maintenance Nakaoka presented the staff report. Director Freeman moved to approve staff’s recommendation to authorize the District to Host the Mobile Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in 2019. Director Abele seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

c. Authorization to Solicit Separate Bids for the Guardian Building Carpeting and Painting Projects- The staff report was introduced by District Manager Peterson who stated the décor options require fabric, paint and carpet decisions. Staff members Duran and Engel presented concepts and samples. The Board expressed its support for option 1 colors, gave instructions to staff to proceed and thanked them for their efforts. Director Freeman moved to approve the authorization to solicit separate bids for the Guardian building carpet and painting projects. Director Abele seconded the motion. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

d. Approval of Resolution No. 1940 Modifying District Policy Manual, Chapter 2, Park Ranger Operational Procedures, Section 2311 Authorized Firearms- The staff report was presented by District Manager Peterson. The Policy committee reviewed the matter and recommended implementation of this policy change. Vice Chair Johnson moved to approve Resolution 1940 Modifying Policy Manual Chapter 2, Section 2311. Director Abele seconded the motion. The motion carried with the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Directors Abele, Freeman, Johnson and O’Brien
Absent: Director Hostetler

9. WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS OF NOTE

a. Certificate of Recognition from Rotary Club of Simi Valley for Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District’s Contributions Towards the 48th Annual Stars and Stripes Fireworks Festival – presented by Chair O’Brien.
10. REPORTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

a. Director Abele attended the Policy Committee meeting and stated the revised mission statement is in progress. Larry Peterson made some excellent suggestions and Abele created a draft statement as well. Director Abele indicated his intent to further refine the language for consideration and suggested the process will take about a month. He thanked staff for the well written and thorough draft of the interim appointment policy. Abele mentioned the recent Acorn newspaper article and stated it was unfortunate and it was not a good press day for the park district. He stated his concern about the initial slant taken by District staff. Abele suggested the District respond to articles with one voice and suggested District Manager Peterson respond to the press. He stated that Peterson’s comments were accurate’. Abele said he is proud to be on the Board, the District does great things and has great employees. However, the District does not come across that way in the paper. He suggested the preparation of press releases to emphasize the great work being performed by the District that benefits the community.

Director Freeman also attended the Policy Committee Meeting and mentioned the discussion included the police department’s suggestion that they dispatch Park Rangers and it was determined that the approach is not advisable and would likely create confusion. She expressed her support for the interim pay policy. Freeman also attended the Historical Society meeting and said how fortunate they were to have a dedicated and active Board. They are proactive and make Strathearn a special place. There was a long discussion regarding moving the Colony House which included discussions about the cost and where it would be located. Larry Silverman has been a dedicated member of the Historical Society Board for many years. He will be moving to St. George. Georgia Trumble and Terri Malkinson are also leaving the area. Freeman would like thank you letter sent to each of them. On February 17, 2018 there will be a Colony House fundraiser. The Committee also reviewed options for chairs and tables for the St. Rose of Lima Church but no decision has been made. The gift shop is under new management, they will be upgrading it and getting new merchandise. On November 18, there will be a rocket event with a great line up of speakers and 33 events. Freeman participated in a CARPD conference call regarding upcoming legislation. The District Manager will be sending out a letter in support of the park bond. Freeman reported that USA properties had a meeting last Monday with City staff and stated the revised architectural plans were well received. The plans will be reviewed again in October, for a 30-day review and will hopefully deem the application complete.

Vice Chair Johnson was unable to attend the soccer foundation meeting. He provided some history on how the District Board and staff members communicated with the press in the past.
Chair O’Brien- Did not attend any meetings. She couldn’t attend the Historical Society meeting due to a family funeral. She is in agreement with the idea to have one voice for the press, however, people are going to interpret it any way they want to.

11. REPORT BY DISTRICT MANAGER - Peterson explained the historical approach to the District’s media relations which included the public information officer Rick Johnson as the authorized media representative. The process required him to interview the staff members most familiar with the subjects before returning to a reporter. The current approach eliminates the extra step by allowing the reporter to discuss directly with the staff member most familiar with the particular subject. District staff members know pretty well what is considered acceptable and what is not. District Manager has met with many reporters over the years in an attempt to help them better understand the District, and he has engaged in the same approach with every subject covered. The goal has always been to make sure accurate information is provided, but there can still be content bias and inaccuracies. He stated his opinion that the Districts media coverage has been pretty good over the years.

12. CLOSED SESSION- none

13. ADJOURNMENT- Vice Chair Johnson moved to adjourn the meeting, Director Freeman seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:13pm.

[Signature]
Larry Peterson, District Clerk